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AUTHOR	Spelleri, Maria
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ABSTRACT

This report reviews four English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) textbooks, using criteria developed for volunteer-based organizations (VBOs). It illustrates the process that VBOs need to undertake prior to ESL textbook selection. The four texts include the following: "Laubach Way to English" (J. Macero and M. Lane), which focuses on linguistic rather than communicative competence; "Life Prints" (J. Podnecky, A. Grognet, and J. Crandall), which aims to give adults the language skills they need to function in their many roles in society; "Side-By-Side" (S. Molinsky and B. Bliss), a grammar-based text that focuses on oral grammatical accuracy; and "The Oxford Picture Dictionary"" (J. Adelson-Goldstein, N. Shapiro, and R. Weiss), which emphasizes fluency in everyday activities through expanded vocabulary of everyday things. For each book, the report includes details on text objectives, approach, instructional format, learner reality, training needed, friendliness, learner placement and progress, and cost. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (Contains 10 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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A Review of the Four Most Widely-Used ESL Texts

by LLA/LVA Affilliates

(Reported in an Independent Survey of Fifty-eight LLA/LVA Agencies)

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As a primary material, the most widely used titles reported were *Laubach Way to English*, *LifePrints*, *Side by Side* and *Oxford Picture Dictionary*. These four texts have been reviewed using criteria developed for volunteer-based organizations and were selected to illustrate the review process that VBOs need to undertake prior to ESL text book selection. Because each VBO has unique qualities based on its location, budget, learner population and volunteer population, the review does not propose to recommend titles for use.

1. *Laubach Way to English* (Macero, J. & Lane, M., 1981)

The *Laubach Way to English* series was developed because of a specific and urgent need: the dramatic increase of ESL learners in what had previously been mainly basic literacy programs. Because Laubach Literacy International has its own publishing house, New Reader's Press was able to come out with a text that specifically targeted the need of Laubach affiliate VBOs. *Laubach Way to English* therefore directly addresses the needs of a volunteer tutor in a one-to-one format. It consists of a Skill Book, an Illustrations Book, several thin fictional "readers", a Workbook, and a Teacher's Manual.

Text Objectives- Linguistic rather than communicative competence appears to be the

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main goal of this book. Lessons focus primarily on grammar objectives, while adding some vocabulary and purely functional conversation objectives, none of which are grouped contextually. Thus, there is no unifying theme for each lesson. There is also heavy emphasis on literacy with complete letter-sound relationships as a main objective throughout the series, and a typical lesson objective might be to "Say and name the sound of each of these letters- M, N, O, P Q, R" (Macero & Lane, 1981, Teacher's Manual 1, p. 156). This is no doubt due to the fact that the LWE series was developed to piggyback on the *Laubach Way to Reading* series used by the basic literacy program.

Approach- The approach is highly audio-lingual. It is drill-based, teacher centered, and attends much more to form and structure than to meaning. Some examples of drill and comprehension questions like "How many persons can sit on the chair?" and "What did the match start?" are evidence of the lower emphasis placed on meaning. There doesn't seem to be any relationship, for example, between the conversation taught in a lesson, and the grammar drill or the reading. There appears to be very little place for creative input from, or negotiation of meaning by the learner.

Instructional Format Suited to- The *Teacher's Manual for Laubach Way to English* specifically states its intention to be a text for tutors in a one-to-one format, (a unique and much needed undertaking), and although the Introduction claims there are some suggestions for adaptation for classroom use, these were not easy to locate. Because everything is geared to the one-to-one format, it would require practice on the part of the tutor to drill a class, and creativity to come up with peer-to-peer activities, none of which

were to be found in the book. A VBO using both one-to-one and small group instruction might need to consider separate texts for each, or separate trainings for volunteer tutors.

Learner Reality Reflected- The Introduction to *Laubach Way to English* notes that it has been designed "specifically for teaching adults who are illiterate in their native language as well as in English..... the *Laubauch Way to English* can be used successfully with many other ESOL students. In particular, literate students whose native languages have writing systems other than the Roman alphabet...." (Macero & Lane, 1981, p. 13). This text assumes a fairly low level of sophistication from the learner, which is logical if the target learner is L1 illiterate. Learners who were educated and literate might find the repetitiveness and blandness of the text condescending (although it is just those qualities which make it appropriate for learners who are more at-risk.) There are no areas of language outside of everyday vocabulary and situations, no thought-provoking discussion topics or pictures. In fact, at least from a review of books 1 and 2, there are no discussion topics at all. Culturally, while some characters appear in the black and white line drawings to represent different races, everyone has names like Bob, Ann, Carl, Mr. Oliver and The Arthurs.

Training Needed- LLA created a training program for *Laubach Way to English* which allots five hours to train a group of new tutors on the text book. The training is so minutely detailed (as are the lesson steps in the teachers' manuals themselves), it is relatively easy for a non-professional to both train and be trained on. *Training by Design*, the LLA packaged tutor training program, spells everything out so no leaps of logic nor

previous knowledge are necessary for either trainers or tutors. But because of the drill-based structure, the tutor really needs to be able to conduct repetition, substitution, transformation and question/answer drills accurately and without hesitation, so extra time might be needed there with certain groups of tutors.

Friendliness- The "friendliest" aspect of LWE is its step by step lesson plan structure. Each lesson follows the same pattern and repeats the same types of activities. Every step is scripted for the novice tutor to read and practice before a lesson. Tutors are informed what objects of realia need to be brought to lessons, and what charts or visuals need to be prepared beforehand. Both reviews and homework are laid out in every lesson. It is truly a no-planning- needed approach and very easy for a non-professional to follow. On the other hand, some volunteers might find the approach inflexible and stifling of their creativity, (as it is a method and a lesson format that might be adequately performed by a responsive computer program), and might need to be shown how to adapt their original ideas into the LWE framework.

For the learner, the simple lines and the larger print of the Skill Book with its plenty of open space is very non-threatening. The accompanying Illustrations Book has unambiguous black line drawings that make no effort to be humorous, clever or graphically artistic. They are simply basic illustrations of a word or action to be taught.

A "friendliness" concern for the learner is that so much of the work in LWE is oral, scripted in the teacher's manual and based on objects or pictures. The learner has no corresponding pages to review when he is away from the tutor, other than cloze exercises without any illustrations in the workbook. This might be an important factor for learners

who need to reinforce their learning outside of the lessons.

Learner Placement and Progress- Placement with LWE can be difficult since phonics-based reading and spelling is a parallel objective with speaking throughout the series, and most volunteer-based organizations do not have the staff and budget to administer intake assessments that reliably test both on a correlating scale. Once a learner is correctly started out, however, the LWE series offers three levels of tightly woven reading, writing and oral grammar objectives. The oral grammar objectives, at least, are based on ever-increasing linguistic complexity.

Three levels, however, are not that many, and LWE suggests moving to the *Laubach Way to Reading* series when book three is completed. That would mean the learner is reading at a fourth grade level, but how are the learner's speaking, grammar and listening skills? What will the tutor do to teach more advanced grammar, vocabulary and discourse?

Cost- To use the *Laubach Way to English* series effectively, a tutor must have the Teacher's Manual, the Skill Book, the Illustrations, and several small readers that come with the program. The Workbook, while not necessary, is the only component that has some record of the grammar of the oral lesson for the learner to look at between lessons. At 2001 New Readers Press prices these total $42.50. There is a lot of material covered at each level, however, at least sixteen detailed lessons that would require 3-4 hours of tutoring each. For many tutor-learner pairs that translates into 15-18 weeks of tutoring before another set of books is needed.

Additionally, the Teacher's Manual, the Illustrations and the readers could be added to a library and constantly recycled as none them require being written in. Because the student really only needs to take home one or two components at a time, the chance for loss by learner attrition is reduced. Of course, an added savings benefit for LLA affiliates who are using the *Laubach Way to Reading* with their Basic Literacy Program is the fact that *Laubach Way to English* uses the same Skill Book and readers as two of its fundamental components. Using the same texts for both programs reduces the need to hold a large inventory of titles, and increases the possibility of getting quantity discounts.

2. ***Life Prints*** ***(Podnecky, J., Grognet, A. & Crandall, J., 1993)***

The *LifePrints* series consists of four level texts, cassettes, a Resource File of reproducible handouts and overheads, a workbook (in the 2002 edition), and a Teacher's Edition. It is also by New Readers Press, the publishing division of Laubach Literacy International, written expressly for the American adult, English as a Second Language market.

Text Objectives- LifePrints reflects the task-oriented existence of adults. It aims at giving adults the language skills they need to function in their many roles in society. Chapters are thematic and relevant to daily life, and aim at authenticity of both experience and activity. It would be remiss to describe the text as simply having "functional" objectives. Each unit is more of an "immersion" in the theme, integrating all four skills, shedding light on cultural differences and combining the functions with the "Life Tasks" (Podnecky, Grognet & Crandall, 1993, book 1, p. 24) so important to adult learners.

Communicative competence and the transference of L1 functional capability in society to L2 capability are the overall objectives.

Approach- The approach of *LifePrints* is highly communicative at the point when the learner is ready. It demonstrates many aspects of the Natural Approach, in that it follows the same principles: the goal of language learning is communication, communication is a process, communication is contextualized, comprehension precedes production, a low-affective filter is necessary, and more (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). There are only a very few activities that are grammar-based, and all structure is dealt with inductively. (The publisher has indicated that there would be more grammar in the 2002 edition). Comprehensible input in the form of pictures, audio, simple readings and teacher input are the core of the program. The approach is very learner-centered and the Teacher's Edition offers many ideas for encouraging the learners to be active partners in their own learning experience.

Instructional Format Suited to- Regarding its design, *LifePrints* can be very easily used in both a one-to-one and a classroom format. The text itself is fairly devoid of pairwork activities, yet there are plenty of suggestions in the Teacher's Manual for those who teach a class, or for those tutors who want to be more of "co-communicators" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 131) with the learner. In the one-to-one situation, the teacher's role is more of an "input filter", helping the learner comprehend the listening and reading presentations, as well as providing the oral descriptive component for the illustrations. There are a few "Interview" type activities which are best done with a group, but these are

in the minority.

While the activities work well with the one-to-one format, the design and structure of the series does not. A large portion of the input of *LifePrints* comes from cassette, and the book can not be used correctly without it. In the case of the volunteer-based organization and its tendency to have dozens, if not several hundred tutors working at many locations around town at all different days and time, the need arises for each tutor to have his or her own cassette. This is an expensive proposition to say the least. Additionally, the Teacher Resource File, while not mandatory, offers highly recommended extra activities and exercises, and is probably kept in the central agency location. Getting volunteers to plan in advance their Resource File needs and come to the agency office to photocopy them can be difficult for VBOs that are not strictly center-based.

Learner Reality Reflected- LifePrints portrays a very ethnically and racially balanced world of characters. Many names are non-Anglo-Saxon, yet are easy to remember and pronounce, like Olga, Kim and Kendra. (I have a problem with the character name "Joon" however, since it is a homophone of "June" which is just a bit of extra confusion not needed at these low levels.) The text also portrays women in non-traditional roles such as a doctor and a welder. It is more of a depiction of city living than suburban or rural, with the characters living in apartments and relying on public transportation. *LifePrints* also accurately mirrors the socio-economic reality of many immigrants by showing wages of $7 an hour, how to "lay-away" to buy a gift, and featuring job postings for a maintenance worker, assembly worker and nurse's aid.

While a reflection of "a" typical immigrant experience, and possibly a majority experience, *LifePrints* can be too condescending to those immigrants with higher educational backgrounds. Working on household budgeting as a concept, (and it would have to be *as a concept* because it is hard to imagine an immigrant actually using a foreign language, English, to plan a personal household budget- Book 2, p. 29), would not be appropriate with most university educated immigrants, and to ask the question "Do you think prenatal care is a good idea?" (Book 2, p. 77), would be insulting.

Training Needed- Laubach Literacy Action has included a component in training on the *LifePrints* series in their *Training By Design* scripted volunteer training program which allots 3 hours for a tutor to be trained on the text, but this really isn't enough for the average group of volunteers with no previous teaching experience. Even though the Teacher's Edition provides step-by-step lesson plans including multiple suggestions for expansion, the tutor may not understand many of the concepts mentioned, such as "Semantic Webbing" and "Learner Experience Approach". The Teacher's Edition at each level does a very good job of providing its own mini-course in ESL techniques in the 25- page introduction, but the tutors need to see demonstrations of the techniques mentioned and to try them out on their own in addition to just reading the descriptions.

Friendliness- LifePrints uses large, spare, black and white drawings not only to illustrate, but as a major component in the comprehensible input provided. These drawings are wonderfully clear and simple, yet expressive and detailed enough to identify new vocabulary. The pages of the text are not too dense, and are highlighted in a single pastel

color that codes each level of the series. *LifePrints* uses a sans serif typeface and a slightly larger font and wider spacing than many other texts, making it particularly new-reader friendly. It is very appropriate for text-shy immigrants, but perhaps less so for those who are used to looking at magazines, browsing the web, and looking at other denser, and more sophisticated-appearing material.

For tutors, *LifePrints* can be misleading. It is friendly in physical appearance for the reasons mentioned above, but is very easy to misuse if one does not have access to the cassettes and the Resource File, or if one does not use the Teacher's Edition. Because of the low density of written text on a page, an "untrained" tutor can be at a loss with what to do with the material, and there have been many examples of tutors claiming to have "finished" a book with their learner in only ten or twelve hours of work, because they did not understand how to manipulate the limited and controlled amount of material presented and were not using the Teacher's Edition as a guide. Following the suggestions in the Teacher's Edition is a must for a non-professional to use this series effectively.

Yet another friendliness issue arises with the need to use a cassette tape player. Assuming that the tutor has a portable one to bring to lessons, there must be an electric outlet nearby, and the meeting must occur in a location where it would not be disturbing others.

Learner Placement and Progress- The *LifePrints* series is correlated to both the BEST (Basic English Skills Test, published by Center for Applied Linguistics) and the CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, published by CASAS) assessment tools, which makes placement easy for agencies using one of those tools for assessment,

or a tool that is correlated to either the BEST or the CASAS. The four books in the series take a learner from beginning literacy/ESL through low-intermediate, so for the many agencies that work with primarily low level learners, linear progression is not an issue. But for other agencies who have an equal number of learners starting at an intermediate level as at the beginning level, they would probably only be able to use Book 3, and then have to move on to another title. "Series jumping" is always more complicated because of the difficulty in making a smooth and purposeful transition not only between texts, but also frequently between objectives as well.

Cost- The problem of the audio-based presentation and the Resource File has already been mentioned. If the non-profit VBOs had rights to copy the audio cassettes, the series would be more usable for one-to-one lessons. At 2001 New Readers Press prices, the total for the student book, the Teacher's Edition, and a cassette is $42. A single Resource File costs $45, which is well worth the money, provided that tutors will use it by coming to the center where it is located to get their photocopies. In the experience of the Literacy Council of Sarasota, only four or five tutors out of one hundred used it with any regularity due to the fact that most volunteers did not have any interest in coming to the office since they were meeting their students at other locations. Despite all *LifePrints* has going for it, most of the Council's tutors were unable to effectively use the series.

3. *Side By Side* (Molinsky, S. & Bliss, B., 2001)

Billed on its own dedicated website as "the most popular American English series in the world", the Molinsky-Bliss text book series keeps spawning integrated components and

getting larger every year. The emphatic description also tips users off to the fact that it is trying to walk the ESL/EFL content line.

Text Objectives- Both the original edition (1989) and the third "new" edition (2001) are grammar-based texts, with each chapter titled by a specific grammar objective, e.g. book 1, chapter 3, "Present Continuous Tense". The focus is on oral grammatical accuracy. In the 2001 edition, an effort has been made to highlight some of the functional language, such as "Expressing Obligation" and "Invitations" (book 1, page 117), but they are included only because they happen to contain the grammar structure which is the focus of the chapter, in this case "Have to" and "Can".

Approach- Side by Side has most of the characteristics which exemplify the audio-lingual approach. The teacher (by authority of the text) specifies the language to be used to communicate. There are dialogs to be memorized, with numerous substitution drills to ensure "over-learning". Superficially, there is contextualization of the grammar structures that are isolated for learning, but the context is not paramount to the presentation and the grammar could be presented in any number of contexts. There are no opportunities for problem-solving or task-based speaking; indeed, the Teacher's Guide notes the section "On Your Own", "offers students the opportunity to contribute content of their own *within the grammatical framework of the lesson"* (Molinsky & Bliss, Teacher's Edition p. viii).

Instructional Format Suited to- The same characteristics that make *Side by Side*

audio-lingual in approach also make it suitable for a one-to-one format. There are no group activities, nothing that requires a peer-to-peer status for dialog or discussion. It is very teacher>student>teacher in its design, so altering the teacher's role to participating tutor does nothing to change that back and forth flow. Dialogs are all controlled and require no creative input where the tutor and learners would not be evenly matched. While there is a listening component and accompanying cassettes, the listenings are very brief and frequently have only one voice which means that if the tutors do not have the cassette, they can read the listening script to the learner to complete the exercises.

Side by Side has many integrated and supplemental components- a whole industry including *Side by Side TV* (a video program), Activity Workbooks, a placement and assessment program, flash cards and more. None of them is required, however, to use the book in the way it was meant to be used, and that is a plus for volunteer-based organizations.

Learner Reality Reflected: There really is no reflection of a learner reality in this text. Its neutrality and blandness (Centerville, Acme Internet Company, Barbara, Jack and Betty, Alan) ensure that its colored cartoon-like characters are palatable to the international EFL market, where appreciation of the multi-culturalism of the main English speaking countries is not an important issue. (In fairness, there are also a Herbert, Maria, and in a reading about nations and nationalities, the DiCarlo and Kowalski families.) By virtue of physical characteristics, the reader can see there are multi-racial representatives throughout the text, and there are famous place names, like Eiffel Tower, San Francisco and British Columbia that again are a bone thrown at the EFL market.

The 2001 edition has a page every so often called "Around the World", where, according to the publisher's website, "photo features introduce cross-cultural topics that offer rich opportunities for discussion" (Side by Side Components, 2001). Some of those "rich opportunities" include transportation in different countries, shopping in different countries, and homes around the world (Molinsky & Bliss, 2001, book 1, pp. 78, 116, 166). Again, the need to be non-offensive and relevant to all ends up looking uninteresting and condescending to many! The situation, the needs, the experience of the adult ESL learners in the United States is completely overlooked.

Training Needed: As far as VBOs working with non-professional tutors are concerned, *Side by Side* requires minimal training. The whole program is self-contained in one book. The Teacher's Guide has clear and simple step-by -step lesson plans for those tutors who need the back-up for confidence building. (The plans even tell the teacher exactly what to write on the board!) The focus of the training provided to tutors on this text should be on dialog presentation, modeling, repetition and substitution, so tutors do not mistake dialog practice for reading comprehension. The overall tutor training workshop would have to compensate for the communicative deficiencies of the series by demonstrating other varieties of teaching techniques besides those based on accurate mimicry.

Friendliness: As long as adults are not put off by cartoons, and as long as adults in the United States are not put off by the lack of immediate relevance to their experience, *Side by Side* is quite friendly in a number of different ways. First of all, it is lighthearted,

colorful, and contains lots of "white space" on each page. Some of the cartoons are humorous and are over-exaggerated to help with meaning comprehension. It also never surprises either the learner or the teacher; everything is controlled and follows an expected pattern. For the non-professional tutor, having just the two pieces, the student book and the useful teacher's guide, is a relief compared to other, multi-part "systems". Chapters are short and closely tied to the chapter objective. Grammar is inductive, in as much as there are no overt rule statements, but rules are expected to be assimilated through repetitions of rule-focused example dialogues. Tutors who feel they are weak in explaining grammar may not have to explain much.

On the negative side, the fact that chapter titles and objectives use grammar terminology may be a put-off for students who never learned any grammar terms in their L1, as well as for tutors who will be at a psychological disadvantage from the first moment they look at the table of contents and not feel sure that they are consciously aware of the contrasts between simple present and present continuous. Many tutors only feel comfortable when they know "the rule".

Learner Placement and Progress- Placement can be tricky if the initial assessment is not grammar-based. There are many students whose level of fluency far surpasses the fluency needed for *Side by Side* Book One, and yet still might have trouble with possessive nouns (chapter five). In many cases with the adult immigrant population, there is an imbalance between fluency and accuracy, either leaning one way or the other depending on how many years the adult has been in the country, and the background education and language learning experiences in the native culture. When using a

grammar-based text, the agency or the tutor needs to acknowledge this imbalance by compensating somehow for the weaker skill . The publisher does offer a placement test made specifically for the series, as well as chapter tests, and end of book tests, which can be very helpful in measuring the discrete points of the grammar objectives. *Side by Side* has four sequential books in the series, based, of course, on increasing complexity of structure, so progress measurement and subsequent book correlation should never be an issue.

Cost- There are only two necessary books, averaging $40, according to a survey of on-line prices. Trainers may want to invest $18 in the *Side by Side Teaching Strategies* for ideas to add to the tutor training workshop. Due to the strict grammar curriculum of the series, agencies may need to invest more in supplemental titles to provide more scope to the services provided the learners.

4. <u>The Oxford Picture Dictionary</u> (Adelson-Goldstein, J., Shapiro, N. & Weiss, R., 1998)

What started as simply a nicely-detailed picture dictionary has become a multi-component, primary text book for many ESL programs. Oxford University Press must have recognized the potential growth for the product early on, when classroom teachers started using it as a basis for lessons in the late 1980s, long before the activity book came out. *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* and its components are actually a later publication than *The New Oxford Picture Dictionary*. In the independent survey completed for this review, volunteer-based literacy organizations failed to specify which of the two they

were using, or at least few added the word "new" to the title, so the rest of this section will be about the latest edition of the dictionary, published in 1998. It is also assumed that volunteer tutors are using the Teacher's Book along with the Dictionary, because without the lesson ideas presented in the former, tutors would just be facing their learners over lists of isolated words.

Text Objectives: The purpose of the text appears to be fluency about everyday activities through expanded vocabulary of everyday things. On its own, the Dictionary is just a list of illustrated words in a visual context. Used together with the Teacher's Book, the objectives become clear: provide the students with enough vocabulary to enable them to communicate on a topic- accuracy aside. There is no direct grammar at all, and the indirect grammar would come about only as students try to manipulate the new vocabulary within a syntax.

Approach: The text itself is just a resource. However, used by a trained teacher who follows most of the suggestions of the Teacher's Book or other ideas along the same line, it follows more of a classic Natural Approach. Lessons are contextualized according to topic (actually very specific topics), the teacher is using pictures (the Dictionary), realia and TPR to make the input comprehensible, and students have the opportunity to remain silent and just "soak up" the vocabulary and contexts provided by the teacher, moving on to single word participation and beyond. The key with the Dictionary is to use the topics and pictures as a base on which to structure the meaning, as guided by the Teacher's Book. Memorizing lists of words will not help the students. Using the Teacher's Book is

essential for the volunteer tutor.

The interesting thing about using a picture dictionary for a text book, is that on its own it is a neutral tool that does not favor one approach over another, and can be adapted by a skillful teacher to fit any situation called for.

Instructional Format Suited to: Because the learner never sees the Teacher's Book contents, he has no way of knowing how many "group" activities are passed over in his one-to-one situation. To the learner, the Picture Dictionary is 100% usable, and the learner will have an easy to use, permanent vocabulary resource, though without much advice on collocation or syntax. From the perspective of the tutor, except for most games, the lessons in the Teacher's Book all work fairly well in a one-to-one format, as long as the tutor is a willing participant in the interviews. It is clear that the expansion material will go a lot further in a group lesson because of student-to-student communication and exchange of ideas.

It would be helpful to have the cassette so the learners can hear all the vocabulary used in meaningful communication, but it is possible to use the text well without it as long as the teacher provides enough meaningful communication on her own.

Learner Reality Reflected: *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* is a vocabulary resource and as such does not reflect developed characters interacting in situations or locations. There is really no focus on people and their interactions at all. The vocabulary presented is a well-rounded selection that reflects different socio-economic, regional and educational backgrounds (for example, the unit about Hobbies and Games includes card games and

knitting as well as chess and stamp collecting, while in the section on work there is information about farming and ranching, as well as about the parts of a computer.) It is completely up to the tutor and the learner to construct the reality and usage of the lessons of the Dictionary. One might also expect the units like Daily Routines (pp. 26-27), Housing (pp. 23-49), and the Market (pp. 54-55) to be more pertinent to most VBO clients than the units on Birds, Insects, and Arachnids (p. 132).

Training Needed: The big danger for a volunteer organization using *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* as its main ESL text is that the tutors will not use it correctly, and there definitely is a right way and a wrong way to use this book if it is the primary material source for an ESL lesson. The Literacy Council of Sarasota has had tutors using the Dictionary as a list of words to be memorized, and the tutors needed to be reminded that having a mental databank of translated words does not necessarily enable one to communicate meaningfully about them. The tutors will need to be trained on all the techniques mentioned in the Teacher's Book, such as brainstorming, dialog (*development*, not only practice), role play, TPR, how to introduce a topic, what to do with realia, etc., and provided with ideas of bridging the generic contexts to students' actual lives. Because there is such a difference in the appearance of the Dictionary and what is actually to be done with it in a lesson, tutor training would have to be fairly extensive.

Friendliness: The Teacher's Book is very tutor-friendly. It has reproductions of each student page, so the tutor does not need an extra copy of the student book, although older volunteers may have trouble with the extra-small print. The Teacher's Book has step-by-

step, creative lesson plans to follow and ideas for expansion. Each unit is cross-referenced to workbook pages, and topically related units in the Dictionary. There is no terminology that might not be understood by volunteer tutors. Additionally, the Teacher's Book has ten introductory pages that thoroughly explain the concept of the book and all parts of the lessons. The book is also not constructed in a progressively more complex matter. Any unit can be studied at any time according the learner's needs.

For the beginning and intermediate student, the student book is also very friendly. It is 90% pictures and only 10% text, and the colorful and detailed drawn pictures are extremely attractive and easy to analyze. However, for a student who needs to do exercises, write in his book or somehow mark progress through the turn of a page, the book will fall short and the tutor will have to make sure the student is creating his own notes and practice in a notebook, or is using the Workbook (at an additional expense, of course), for further practice.

Learner Placement and Progress: Placement with *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* is easy because the level neutrality of the material means that it can be successfully used with any learner up to a high intermediate. The complexity of the material depends on the teacher input that accompanies the book. Progress may be harder to track since there are no described unit objectives other than the implied, which is, naturally, the vocabulary words of the presented context. An agency could develop a checklist of tasks, skills, competencies, etc. that learners should be able to accomplish upon completion of a unit, but then that might restrict the tutor from exploring the specific needs of his learner.

Also, *The Oxford Picture Dictionary*, when used correctly with the Teacher's Book,

contains a large amount of information, more than 125 separate context units. Hypothetically, with one unit taking more than one tutoring session, to actually complete the 75% of the text that might be relevant to any single student would take well over a year at the once or twice a week frequency of tutoring. This gives the *appearance* of very slow progress for many learners who are accustomed to the "one book equals one skill level" type or learning program.

Finally, beginning students who have questionable L1 literacy, or who are not somewhat familiar with the sound system of the English alphabet will need extra- text support in reading and writing, and high-intermediate and above students will have to use a different title altogether.

Cost: The Dictionary is $13.95, and the Teacher's Book costs $16.95, according to the Oxford University Press website. The typical volunteer tutor who has several different learners during his volunteer "career" can use the same Teacher's Book again and again. Furthermore, inventory concerns are reduced since the same book can be used across many different levels, and the density of the material means it will not need to be replaced for quite a while.

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Organization/Address: Manatee Community College 5840 26th St. W. Bradenton, FL 34207	Telephone: hm (941) 330-1621	Fax: (941) 330-1611
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